



NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

It's Later Than You Think

According to reporter and agronomist, Daniel Tanuro (Toronto Star, 13/Dec/2008), "Many climatologists fear the gradual melting of ice will be replaced by ice break up, causing a huge rise in sea level. Such a scenario increases the necessity of rescuing our climate." Tanuro explains that lakes of melted ice form on the surface of the polar ice caps in the summer, driving cracks down through the ice, creating conduits. So much water surging down to the bedrock of the ice sheet could contribute to massive icebergs breaking off and sliding into the sea, causing a sharp rise in sea level. Tanuro says, "It's the glaciologists' worst nightmare."

The Greenland ice sheet contains enough water to raise the oceans by six metres, and now the Antarctic is causing concern. If its eastern ice sheet were to disappear, the oceans would rise by no less than fifty metres. The Antarctic peninsula and the west ice sheet each contain enough water to raise the sea level by five metres. The mountain valleys of the peninsula are narrow and winding, meaning glaciers could slide more quickly into the sea and the speed of some ice floes has tripled in the last few years. The bedrock beneath the west ice sheet lies mainly below sea level. Experts are worried that the circumpolar current, which is getting warmer and gradually approaching the coast, could cause the underwa-

ter anchor of the ice sheet to melt. One metre of sea level rise would endanger the lives of tens of millions – thirty million Bengalis, ten million Egyptians, and a quarter of Viet Nam's population would have to leave their homes. London and New York would be threatened. In 1999,



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicted that in the next seven years the sea level would rise by two millimeters. It rose by 3.3 mm. In other words, it's worse than the experts predicted and with the refusal of the US to sign the Kyoto Agreement, there's no sign that it will decrease or stop.

The IPCC president, Rajendra Pachauri, described it as a frightening situation and spoke of his hope that the next report, "... will be able to provide much better information on the possibility of these two large bodies of ice (Greenland and the West Ant-

arctic sheet) melting. This report will not be out until 2013. Who knows what will happen in the meantime. Politicians, who are concerned only with capitalism's immediate needs will always downplay such dire predictions as if they know better and thus recommendations are always far

too weak to have any real affect. A typical example is Sir Nicholas Stern, former chief economist at the World Bank. In his 2006 report to the British government, he said, "The lesson here is to avoid doing too much, too fast, because great uncertainty remains as to the costs of very deep reductions of greenhouse gases of 60% to 80% or more from industrial processes, aviation and a number of areas." Furthermore, great scientists and climatologists like Regis and Kelly,

and David Letterman, enter your living room and talk about global warming as if it were an enormous joke. At least Mr. Tanuro is closer to the mark in his summation, "The worry is that climate negotiations, if they lead anywhere, will lead to targets determined by profits rather than the protection of people and the safety of the planet." Socialists already know that as long as capitalism exists, profits will determine any course of action, or in this case, inaction. In the mad, helter skelter, anything goes as long as it is profitable, anarchy of capitalist production, things won't improve until that system is abolished.

Common Ownership

means that the resources of the world and the means to produce useful goods from them would be owned by everyone and, therefore, by no one. All humanity would be producers meeting as equals to decide what, how, and where to produce based solely on mankind's needs. Distribution of goods and services would deny no one access to what they needed. This system would end the present class system and render money, trade, employment, exploitation, want, and war obsolete.

We welcome correspondences with our readers. Send email to spc@iname.com or write us at BOX 4280, Victoria BC, V8X 3X8

Insanity or Common Sense

— Your Choice

Most people are drawn to examine and accept the socialist case because of its pure logic and common sense. Once socialism is comprehended, the view of our current system of production, capitalism, comes into focus and the view is bleak and incomprehensible. The very basis of capitalism – that the ownership of the earth's resources and riches should belong to a small minority that stole and plundered them, eliminating millions of people who stood in the way in the process, is sheer insanity. That those riches, and the means to convert them into useful goods, should be organized in the interests of that minority to the detriment and deprivation of the vast majority of the earth's population only serves to compound that insanity.

This state of affairs leads to our present relations of production, e.g. oppressor and oppressed, owner and non-owner, boss and worker. This gives us our two classes – those who own but do not produce and those who produce but do not own. The owners take possession of the producers' products and the profits realized from their sale to live a life of ease and luxury, while those who labour to produce them get just enough to keep them labouring and often much less than that. Does this make sense? Unfortunately, it gets much worse. The parasitic owning class enjoy the best housing, clothing, education, healthcare, holidays and recreation that money can buy, with so much left over that they couldn't possibly spend the excess if they tried. Meanwhile, most of the producers make do with substandard

housing, food, healthcare and education. While some workers, whose skills are in high demand by the system for making profit, may do quite well, they are greatly outnumbered by the millions, even billions who live in abject poverty and scramble daily to survive. Sadly, thousands every day, mostly children under five years, lose the struggle.

All producers, including those considered relatively wealthy, live with the insecurity of job loss and the prospect of falling into poverty. The workers only work at the pleasure of the owners and their expectations of profit. Like compound interest, inequality in the capitalist system compounds as profit and dividends are re-invested to accumulate ever-larger sums of capital, increasing the gap between owner and producer. The competition for resources and profits between these groups of capital, to which the owners contribute, frequently leads to conflict and, sometimes, even war, surely the greatest insanity of the human experience. What could be more insane than one group of humans dropping bombs on another group, or having 20% of the world's scientific brains given to creating more efficient tools of death and destruction?

For the thinking person, many everyday realities are insanities – food banks in the "developed" rich nations where food abounds; homelessness or unsatisfactory housing where building materials and skills are prevalent; malnourished, sickly people where hospitals and doctors are, or could easily be, plentiful; recreational, educational and job restrictions where there

is no need, save to serve the profit motive; a whole "third" or "developing" world of billions who live in unimaginable poverty and deprivation when our productive forces could provide good food, housing, health care, and education. Ready for the common sense part yet?

A socialist world would be based on the common ownership of the world's riches and the productive forces to turn them into useful goods. Since all products would therefore be commonly owned, they would be freely accessed by all, according to their needs. Imagine, No more rich or poor, privileged or marginalized, boss or worker, owner or non-owner. All producers would meet as equals to decide what, how, where, when to produce to meet everyone's needs, without regard to money or profit. Would we then produce the shoddy goods of today, using dirty, polluting techniques? Would we ravage and despoil the earth's forests, soils, waterways, and air, in the pursuit of profit for a privileged class? Of course not! That's just common sense. Would we go to war over resources, or manage them sensibly in the interests of all humankind? Would we allow anyone to live malnourished, homeless, illiterate, unfulfilled lives if we had the power to change it? Of course we wouldn't.

It is only the restriction of the capitalist mode of production and the pursuit of profit that creates the insanity of our world. It is only the common sense of a socialist society that can remedy our present situation and create a world of cooperation and plenty for everyone – no classes,

no money, no war, no poverty, no want. Capitalism has brought the potential to do this but cannot deliver. That next step must be the purpose of a socialist society. It is possible given today's productive capacities and scientific knowledge.

So it's up to you, reader, to choose to continue this insanity or to look at the alternative. When a majority have done that and decided to act, socialism and common sense will become a reality. There really is no choice, is there?

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